LUTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR

1914.

DUNSTABLE:
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1914.

Luton Rural District Council.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for 1914.

LEAGRAVE,

23/1/15.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for 1914.

The district is chiefly agricultural, partly industrial and residential (near Luton). The soil varies, being chiefly clay in the north, and gravel and chalk in the south and west.

Population.

The population in 1911 was 9775, and is now estimated at 9900, and is concerned in agriculture, cement and lime works, and the straw hat industry. None of the occupations has much influence on the public health.

Vital Statistics.

During the year 223 births and 130 deaths were registered in the district, giving a birthrate of 22·52 per thousand per annum, and a death rate of 13·13 per thousand per annum. There have been 14 deaths of residents not registered in the District, and 25 deaths of non-residents registered in the

District. This gives a total of 119 deaths belonging to the District and a net death rate of 12·02 per thousand. Of these deaths 18 were under one year of age, 9 between one and two, 2 between two and five, 6 between 5 and 15, 6 between 15 and 25, 8 between 25 and 45, 23 between 45 and 65, and 49 over 65. The deaths were distributed as follow:—Diphtheria 2, Whooping Cough 4, Enteric 1, Pulmonary Tuberculosis 4, Pneumonia 9, Enteritis 4, Nephritis and Bright's Disease 7, Bronchitis 6, Cancer 7, Organic Heart Disease 13, Old Age 16, Premature Birth 2, Diabetes 3, Suicide 1, Wilful Murder 1, Accident 1, other diseases 38.

Infantile Mortality.

There were 18 deaths registered in the District under one year of age, this gives a death rate of 80·71 per thousand births. The deaths were due to the following causes:—Whooping Cough 1, Tuberculosis (General) 1, Enteritis 2, Premature Birth 3, Congenital Malformation 1, Laryngitis 1, Diarrhœa 1, Accident 1, Wilful Murder 1, other causes 6.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

There were 4 deaths registered from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, as against 9 the previous year. Seven cases were notified at Church End, Totternhoe. Several of the cottages here are in an extremely poor condition. Grave defects existed with regard to ventilation. In several, the living room windows could not be opened. Notices were served in many instances, and these defects remedied. The cottages, however, are very small, the rooms, especially the bedrooms, being small, low, and ill ventilated. *In one case, a tenant suffering from consumption moved into another cottage, and into the one vacated by him there came a family of husband, wife, and wife's brother; these three all developed consumption.*

Outbreak of Enteric Fever at Sundon.

The four cases of enteric here were probably due to drinking water from polluted wells. Practically all the water supply at Sundon is obtained from shallow wells, and analyses of the water from these wells proved the pollution of this water over most of the area. Notices were at once issued to all occupiers warning them to boil the water before using it for domestic purposes.

As the Joint Isolation Hospital was unable to deal with the above cases, and there was no possibility of isolating the

cases at the patients' homes, a house at Lower Sundon was obtained, nurses engaged, and the cases removed to this Temporary Hospital.

Apparently much of the polluted state of the soil at Upper Sundon is due to the privy midden system, which has now been superseded by the pail closet system, which, with the regular attention given by the Council Scavenger, is proving satisfactory: The Council are now preparing a scheme for suitable supply of water for the village.

Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria.

Both diseases have been very prevalent in *Luton and Dunstable, and in the rural parishes where most of the cases occurred there is constant communication with these boroughs.* In the aforementioned parishes (Caddington, Houghton Regis, Hyde, Leagrave, Limbury, and Stopsley) there were 36 cases of Scarlet Fever, and only 6 cases in the rest of the District; and 24 cases of Diphtheria in these parishes and 6 cases in the remaining part of the District. In every case where isolation was not possible at the homes of the patients they were removed to the Isolation Hospital at Kensworth.

It may be of interest to record here an account of a somewhat severe outbreak of *rubella* which occurred in Leagrave, and probably other parts of the district, in the spring of the year. Fifty-eight cases came under my own observation in Leagrave and Limbury, and in the initial stages there was considerable doubt as to the diagnosis, as the disease with very few exceptions was of the scarlatiniform type, and only in some half a dozen cases appeared mixed, that is, showed rashes resembling both scarlet fever and measles in the same patient. The premonitory symptoms were in many cases catarrhal, swelling of glands was common, and a large number had sore throats. In thirteen cases the rash was very pronounced, and looked exactly like scarlet fever; in twenty cases it was patchy, and disappeared gradually, some areas remaining for five or six days; but in the majority of cases it disappeared as suddenly as it came. The highest temperature recorded (one case) was 102, and the average temperature during the height of the eruption was 101. Itching of the skin was a common feature, and in seven cases was followed by a slight branny desquamation. The disease was very infectious, all the children in a family developing it in two or three days, but babies escaped. All the cases recovered without complications.

Cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the year 1914.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	NUMBER OF CASES NOTIFIED.							
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.						
		Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 15	15 to 25.	25 to 45.	45 to 65.	65 and upwards.
Diphtheria (including Membraneous Croup)	30	...	6	17	4	3	...	...
Scarlet Fever	42	...	2	34	5	1	...	...
Enteric Fever	4	...	...	...	2	2	...	...
Puerperal Fever	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	18	...	...	2	8	8	...	...
Other forms of Tuberculosis	2	...	...	1	...	1	...	...

Water Supply.

The water supply of the District, on the whole, has been plentiful and satisfactory, with the exception of Sundon.

Leagrave, Limbury, and Stopsley are supplied by the Luton Water Company, and the greater part of Houghton Regis is now supplied by the Dunstable Water Company. As stated previously, the Council are now considering a scheme of water supply for Sundon.

Drainage.

A considerable amount of work has been carried out at Houghton Regis in connecting drains from properties to the new sewer, and in almost all cases entirely new drainage has been put in.

Notices have been served, and defects in drainage remedied in many cases in other parts of the Council's area.

Sewerage.

Sewerage schemes are in existence at Houghton Regis and Barton. At Houghton Regis, the new sewer is connected to the Dunstable Sewage Farm and Disposal Works, and the arrangement is satisfactory.

At Barton, most of the properties are connected to the sewer which is carried to septic tanks and filter bed in the meadow at the North end of the village, and this works satisfactorily.

At Manor Road, the sewer there discharges into a large tank, from whence it is pumped on to a meadow, and distributed over the surface by means of wood troughs. Some trouble has been experienced here, owing to the excessive rainfall during the last three months, and to the evident fact that surface water is finding its way into the sewer, presumably, from some storm water gullies or other openings being connected to this sewer. Steps are being taken to remedy this, and exclude all storm water.

In most of the other parishes the cesspool system is in vogue, and, where most used, the Council carry out the scavenging of the same.

Refuse Disposal and Scavenging.

The scavenging of Houghton Regis, Limbury, Stopsley, and Sundon, carried out by the Council under contract, has been done throughly and satisfactorily. Since October 1st,

the Council have, by direct labour, carried out the scavenging of Leagrave and Limbury Parishes.

In other parts of the area the work has been generally satisfactory, but difficulty is experienced in some cases, where the available ground near the cottages for the disposing of the excreta from pails and privies, is extremely limited.

Many defective and insanitary ashpits have been removed and suitable galvanised dust bins provided in place thereof.

A considerable amount of extra work has been entailed at Houghton Regis, Leagrave, Limbury and Stopsley owing to the presence of troops, but in all cases the work has been carried out to the entire satisfaction of the Military Authorities.

Closet and Ashpit (or Dust Bin) Accommodation.

Parish.	Houses.	Privies.	Pails.	W.C.'s	Privies converted to Pail Closts.	Privies & Pails to W.C.'s.	Ashpits.	Dust Bins.	Ashpits converted to Dust Bins.
Barton	181	90	55	10	9	...	80	10	6
Caddington	355	147	166	19	16	...	70	32	13
Hyde	144	30	70	10	...	...	80	20	...
Houghton Regis	361	54	71	157	...	126	59	190	20
Kensworth	135	42	44	6	6	...	30	12	4
Leagrave	335	12	102	187	5	...	20	184	21
Limbury	251	10	30	204	2	2	6	190	6
Stopsley	201	41	84	40	6	1	12	48	20
Streatley	65	13	36	4	3	...	13	10	4
Studham	80	7	60	7	4	...	46	12	3
Totternhoe	121	36	70	4	2	...	22	18	4
Whipsnade	32	12	12	2	2	...	14	4	2
Totals	2261	494	800	650	55	129	452	730	103

House Sanitation.

Many alterations and improvements have been carried out in connection with working class dwellings, chiefly in regard to dampness, and lack of ventilation.

House Accommodation.

New dwellings with three or more bedrooms to each have been erected at Barton 2, Caddington 12, Houghton Regis 1, Hyde 6, Leagrave and Limbury 34, Stopsley 1, Streatley 4, Totternhoe 6. Included in the above are the four cottages erected by the Council at Totternhoe. The Council have applied for a loan for the erection of eight cottages at Upper Sundon.

There is a dearth of three bedroomed cottages at Barton, Caddington, Kensworth, Streatley, Stopsley, Sundon and Totternhoe.

House Inspection.

674 cottages (under annual rental of £16) have been inspected for the second time under the 1909 Act. Also, the first inspection of 40 cottages (mostly new dwellings) has been carried out.

Schools.

The schools and surroundings have been regulary inspected during the year, and the sanitary arrangements and conditions were satisfactory with the exception of Whipsnade, where a notice was served and defects remedied in connection with insanitary ashpit, privies, and drainage.

The two schools at Houghton Regis have had a new system of drainage (with water closets) installed, and have been connected to the new sewer.

Closing Orders.

These were issued in connection with 41 cottages (Caddington 4, Houghton Regis 23, Stopsley 11, Streatley 1, Studham 2). Of these, 10 have been closed, 15 repaired or being repaired, and notices were left over in the case of a block of ten cottages at Houghton Regis owing to the billeting of troops in the village.

Cowsheds and Dairies.

An exhaustive inspection of the Cowsheds and Dairies has been carried out over the whole of the district.

The chief defects found were defective drainage, and paving in sheds, poor lighting, unpaved and dirty yards, and uncleanly condition of sheds.

Notices were served re lime washing and cleanliness, and in every case the work was carried out.

The matter of structural repairs and alterations is receiving attention and notices are being sent to the owners to carry out the neccesary work.

Slaughter Houses

Have been inspected at various times, and defects remedied where noted.

Under the new Bye-laws (now in force) all slaughter

houses must be licensed, and by this means it is hoped that thoroughly satisfactory structural arrangements will be secured.

Factories, Workshops, and Bakehouses.

These have been systematically inspected and defects remedied. On the whole, the factories and workshops are well ventilated and clean. One bakehouse has been closed, on complaint, as being structurally unfit for the purpose.

1.—INSPECTION.

Including Inspections by Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises.	Number of		
	Inspections.	Written Notices.	Prosecutions.
Factories ... ... (Including Factory Laundries)	15	1	...
Workshops... ... ... (Including Workshop Laundries)	27	12	...
Workplaces	12		...
Total	54	13	...

2.—DEFECTS FOUND.

Particulars.	Number of Defects.		
	Found.	Remedied.	Referred to H.M. Inspector.
Nuisances under the Public Healths Acts:—			
Want of Cleanliness	3	3	...
Want of Ventilation	...	...	...
Overcrowding	...	...	...
Want of Drainage of Floors ...	3	3	...
Other Nuisances	2	2	...
Sanitary Accommodation { insufficient ... ... / unsuitable or def'tve / not separate for sexes	5	5	...
Offences under the Factory and Workshops Acts:—			
Breach of special sanitary requirements for bakehouses...	2	2	...
Total ...	15	15	...

General Sanitation.

The sanitary condition of the district is generally satisfactory, and from the report of the Sanitary Inspector (appended) it will be seen that a considerable amount of work has been carried out during the year.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN ROLLINGS,

Medical Officer of Health.

Sanitary Inspector's Summary for Year ending December 31st, 1914.

Notices Served: Informal, A 133, B 35, Final (statutory) 29, Total (affecting 333 dwellings)	197
,, ,, re Removal of Refuse (under Bye-laws)	33
Houses Repaired	97
,, Cleansed and Limewashed	12
Ashpits, Closets, etc. repaired	209
Drainage Works, Paving etc. (not including Houghton Regis) ..	155
Bakehouses inspected (including 1 closed as unfit for use)... ...	15
Slaughter Houses inspected	
Licensed Premises ,, ...	48
Dairies and Cowsheds ,, (Cowsheds 64, Dairies 17)	81
(45 Cowkeepers) (12 notices sent re cleansing and limewashing)	
Infections Cases Reported	97
(Scarlet 42, Diphtheria 30, Enteric 4, Tuberculosis 20, Puerperal 1)	
Infectious Cases removed to Hospital (including 4 at Sundon) ...	57
,, ,, Houses Disinfected	72
Notices re overcrowding...	1
,, re Wells (provision of separate pails etc.)	4
Water Analyses (affecting 124 cottages)	22
Closing Orders (Closed 10, Repaired or being Repaired 15) ...	41

Refuse Removal	Loads
Houghton Regis	458
Leagrave	198
Limbury	679
Stopsley	1375
Sundon	173
Loads	2883

(Leagrave from October 1st only)

Scavenging of Leagrave and Limbury now carried out by Direct Labour.

Houghton Regis.

New Drainage, Water Closets, etc., connected to new sewer 223 houses.

One case of Anthrax occurred at Little Bramingham Farm, (Tenant : J. D. Browning). The carcase was seized and destroyed by the police, and the premises cleansed and disinfected.

Erection of Workmen's Cottages by the Council.

Four cottages, with three bedrooms to each were completed in the early part of the year at Totternhoe, and were immediately let and occupied.

Plans have been approved and a scheme for the erection of eight similar cottages at Upper Sundon recommended.

Plans Approved.

New dwellings 52, Alterations and Additions to dwellings 20, Temporary Buildings 3, New Streets 2, New Factories and Workshops 3, Stables and Sheds 2, Cowshed 1.

New Dwellings erected and approved 66.

Houses re-inspected under the 1909 Act (under £16)	674
" inspected " " ... ... (chiefly new dwellings)	40
No. of Houses reported unfit for habitation	44
" " " to Council for closing... ...	38
Closing orders made	38
No. of Houses repaired without orders being made ...	6
" " put in fit condition for habitation ... (being repaired 5)	7
Closed...	10

(Notices re 10 cottages at Houghton Regis in abeyance owing to billeting of troops in the village).

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

HAROLD PICKERING,

Inspector and Surveyor.